soothin' things me and Pinckney could think up to say.

"Writes plays and knows enough to be college professor!" he'd mutter to himself. "And me—why, I have to hire a secretary to shape up my business letters! Great catamounts, boys, but I never expected this! Say, have I got to talk to him long?"

It's funny, but this end of the romance business never occurred to me before. You hear a lot about how the lovely heroine feels, and how the noble hero has palpitation of the heart when he's wonderin' if she'll have him or not; but a prospective father in law workin' up goosefleshy emotions was a new one on me.

It was the real thing, though. Half an hour before, when John Henry had walked out of that three days' wrangle with a crowd led by Pyramid Gordon, he hadn't turned a hair. But now he was leakin' from every pore and his knees was gettin' wabbly.

"Look here, boys," says he, as we piles into the Purdy-Pells' car at the station, "can't—can't we put this thing off a day or two, until I can kind of brush up my polite manners and schoolin'? Just a day or so, you know?"

"Ah, buck up, Mr. Waller!" says I. "He won't put you through no college exam, or ask how you spell diphtheria. All he'll ask is if you're willin' he should hook up with Marjorie."

But, say, by that time John Henry is so rattled that comfortin' words don't have any effect at all, and when we fin'lly drags him out on the porte-cochère steps he almost bolts back into the limousine.

"It's no use, boys," says he. "I—I can't do it just now; not for an hour or so, anyway. Honest, I wouldn't go into that house and meet him now, not for a thousand dollars! Say, couldn't I go out there on them rocks and rest up a little?"

As there was nothing else to it, I leads him out to a little summerhouse on the edge of the waterfront and does my best to calm him down, while Pinckney goes in to hunt up Marjorie. We waits ten minutes or more, and then I gets him to promise not to beat it back to town while I'm finding out what's doin' inside.

And, say, down in the billiard room, who should I run across but Pinckney and Mr. Giddings. Talbot, he's fannin' himself with his straw lid and grippin' the chair seat hard with his left hand. He's a slim, nervous complected chap, with a bald spot on the front of his head, and he wears shell rimmed eyeglasses.

"Yes, I know, my dear fellow," he's sayin' to Pinckney; "but really, I'm not up to meeting him now, you know. It's bally foolish of me, I admit; but I can't do it."

"What's this?" says I. "Another case of cold feet?"

That's what it was. Talbot had been hangin' around for a week, expectin' Mr. Waller to show up any minute, and it had got on his nerves. Besides that, he'd just begun to hear what a prominent gent old John Henry was in big money circles, and how Marjorie was an heiress, and the thoughts of how he was goin' to break it to her father had got him down and out.

"Well, say," says I, "you two are a hot pair, you are. Go on out there and get together."

MAYBE they'd been there yet, each one shakin' in his shoes at the prospect of meetin' the other, if I hadn't got disgusted and thought up this scheme of breakin' the spell. Towin' Pinckney one side, I whispers my plan to him, and it tickles him all over.

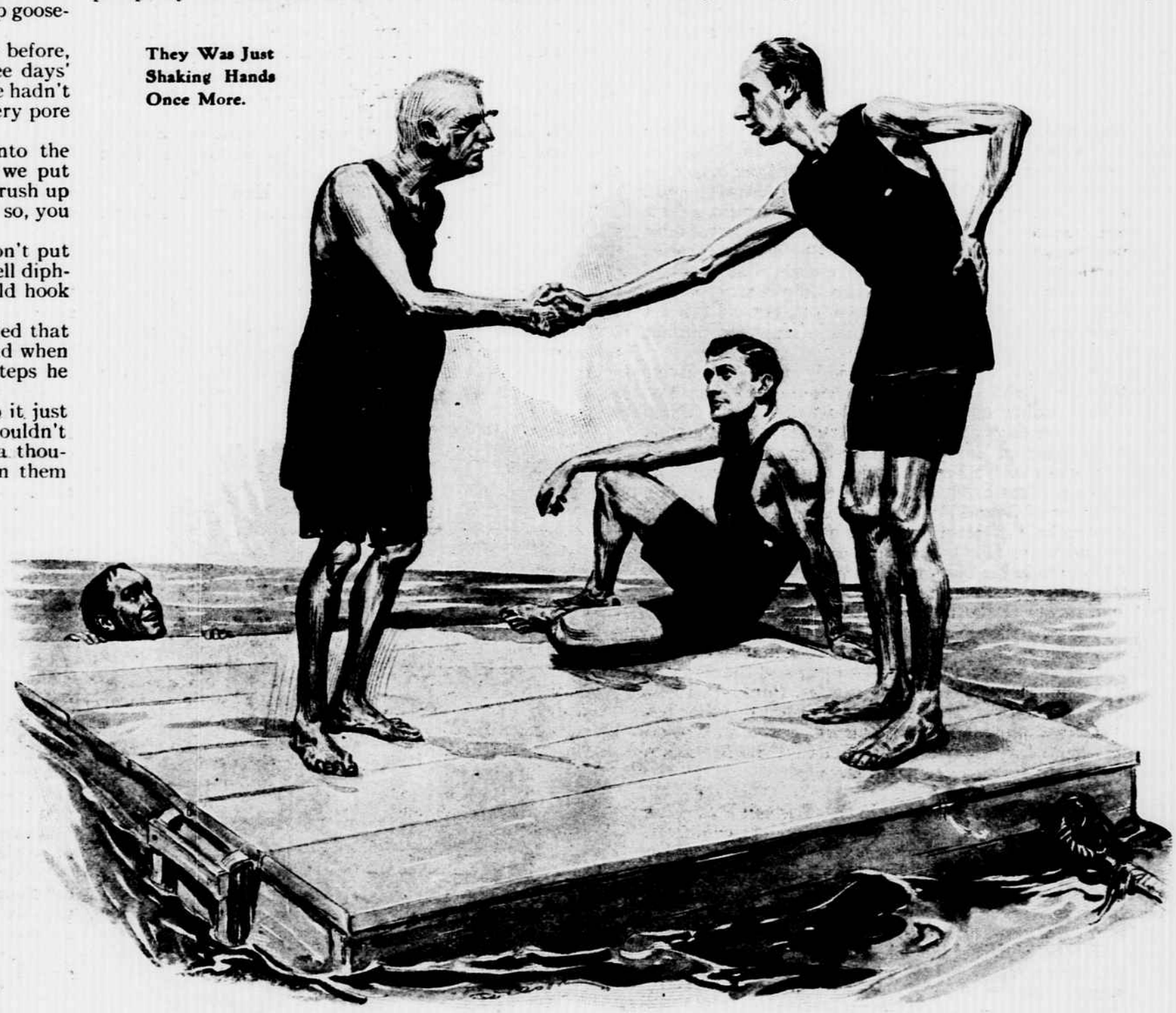
"We'll do it, by Jove!" says he. "I can manage Talbot."

"I don't know about John Henry," says I; "but, if it comes to that, I can push him off the rocks."

I didn't have to go that far, though. When I suggests that the best way to cool off before dinner is to get into a bathin' suit and splash around in the Sound for an hour, he jumps at the chance. Anything to avoid meetin' the Englishman that knows so much suits him.

"And I haven't had a swim in salt water since I was a boy," says he.

Course, it's a simple enough scheme. We was just strikin' out for the divin' float, anchored about a quarter of a mile out, when we sees a couple of other chaps further up the shore startin' in the same direction, and we pumps up our best overhand stroke to beat 'em to it.



**They Was Just Shaking Hands Once More.**

It's almost a dead heat; for we hadn't more'n climbed up before they're alongside, and as they was blowin' some hard we lends 'em a hand. I don't say much, but winks at Pinckney.

Old John Henry got so excited durin' the race that he's clean forgot about his nerves, and he stands there blowin' and puffin' and drippin' water, like some shaggy old porpoise. The other gent, with his wet bathin suit hangin' off his shoulderblades and flappin' around his skinny shanks, looks about as substantial and imposin' as a yardstick on end.

"Well, well!" says I. "This is odd, ain't it? Look who's here! Mr. Waller, guess this is a good time for you to get acquainted with Mr. Giddings."

"Wha-a-at!" gasps John Henry, starin' at Talbot, who's begun to shiver in the wind. "Do you mean to say this is the—" Well, he caught himself in time from sayin' whatever was on the end of his tongue, and starts to grin. As for Talbot, he's busy takin' in some of the queer curves of Pa Waller's figure. And, say, you know about how much dignity you can carry around in a wet bathin' suit. From that minute there ain't any stage fright in evidence on either side. Both of 'em laughs hearty and swaps grips.

"Now, Talbot," says Pinckney, "while Shorty and I are making this dive, for heaven's sake get it out and have it over with."

Hanged if they didn't do it, too! For when I came up from bottom they was just shakin' hands once more, and before dinner was over that night they was gettin' quite chummy.

"Did you notice," says I to Sadie, "how me and Pinckney smoothed things out once we got our mighty intellects to work on the proposition? Maybe you saw what happened out on the float?"

"Oh, yes," says she. "We were watching from the upper veranda. And I could have shaken you for trying such a silly scheme."

"Silly!" says I. "Well, I like that! What was the matter with it?"

"Matter!" says she. "Exhibiting Mr. Giddings in that foolish bathing suit where Marjorie could see him! You came near breaking off that match, that's what you did. You came near spoiling the whole romance."

# AIR-SHRUNK FOODS, FRESH IN WINTER

## By René Bache

THE food problem seems likely before long to be greatly simplified by the opportunity of buying all kinds of vegetables in a practically fresh condition at moderate prices throughout the winter. They will be sold in a dry state—that is to say, water free, but preserved in such a way as to retain all their original palatability. The housewife will purchase them not in tins, but by the measure—put up usually, perhaps, in pasteboard packages.

This prospect is afforded through a means newly discovered, which has proved highly successful, whereby fresh vegetables and some fruits, such as raspberries, are dried without the use of heat. Hitherto all processes employed for such purposes have depended upon high temperatures, which radically alter the flavor of the products. Under the improved method, the green peas, string beans, cabbages, carrots, onions, or other "garden truck," are placed on small cars in a tunnel, through which a current of moderately warm, dry air is kept continually passing. The air literally sucks the moisture out of the vegetables, until they are reduced to a condition of absolute desiccation.

How thorough the desiccation is may be judged from the fact that a pound of spinach which has undergone this treatment is equivalent to eighteen pounds of fresh spinach. A pound of carrots represents ten pounds of the fresh article. A pound of cabbage is equal to fifteen pounds of the fresh. A pound of onions is equivalent to fourteen pounds of fresh onions. A pound of potatoes represents seven pounds of newly-dug tubers, and a pound of soup greens is equal to twenty-two pounds of fresh soup greens.

There is no reason why vegetables treated in this way should undergo the slightest alteration in respect of flavor. As a matter of fact, they do not; and it appears that they will keep for an indefinite period. When they are wanted for use, all that is necessary is to pour cold water over them, and allow them to remain thus immersed for three hours, at the end of which time they will have absorbed a normal percentage of water, and will be ready for use like fresh vegetables. They are in truth fresh vegetables, held for the time being in a water free state.

One should explain, however, that, in order that the desiccation shall be made as perfect as possible, the more bulky vegetables, such as potatoes and cabbages, must be sliced or shredded. Such a process does not render them less appetizing, though it adds somewhat to the cost of production. There is no reason, however, why garden truck thus treated should be very expensive, inasmuch as, for commercial purposes, all such material would be purchased at the season of the year when it is cheapest. So extremely simple are the means adopted that it seems not unlikely that in the near future a method will be devised whereby the housewife, buying a large stock of different kinds of vegetables when they are cheapest, can herself put them through the requisite process, thus laying in supplies for the whole winter, and saving herself a great deal of money. For centuries this very thing has been done on a limited scale, and in a crude way, for the preservation, in a desiccated state, of apples, peaches, and certain other things.

Mrs. Rorer, an authority on such subjects, reveals what she calls "an old family secret" in describing a method whereby green corn on the cob may be kept far into the winter, retaining its freshness and flavor. All that is necessary is to dip it into boiling water, and dry it in a room where there is a free circulation of air. The clever housewife may thus have sweet corn at her Christmas dinner, for a surprise dish. Carefully shelled peas and beans, says Mrs. Rorer, may be treated in the same way with equal success.

This represents merely a primitive way of accomplishing desiccation by air. But, when the process is scientifically performed, the boiling water may be eliminated. One of the principal objections to the ordinary "evaporating" methods for treating vegetables and fruits is that the high temperatures employed cause the escape of the greater part of the volatile oils and ethers

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